

GRAPPLE ANCHOR DEVICE FOR UNDERWATER TOWING OF WATERCRAFT

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A grapple anchor device suspended underwater from an unmanned watercraft has prongs pivotally mounted on its tubular housing for hooked engagement with a tow line extended from a retrieval ship so as to tow the watercraft underwater toward the ship. A tow rod within the grapple anchor housing, connected by an anchor line to the watercraft being towed, undergoes dampened axial displacement to condition the grapple anchor device for automatic release of the prongs from the tow line in response to a reduction in the towing force exerted through the tow line after the watercraft is towed into position adjacent the retrieval ship and undergoes crane lift up onto the retrieval ship by its shipboard crane so that the tow line may be withdrawn while the watercraft is transferred onto the ship.